



PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN EUGENE CELEBRATION REPORT October 2002

This report contains an Executive Summary and a detailed analysis of the Eugene Celebration questionnaire results, including key observations. There are three appendices. Appendix A is a copy of the questionnaire, Appendix B consists of detailed data tables, and Appendix C is a summary of open-ended responses to the questionnaire.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Introduction

The City of Eugene Park, Recreation and Open Space Comprehensive Plan exhibit at the Eugene Celebration is part of an extensive public involvement program to involve Eugene residents in developing the comprehensive plan. The exhibit was open on Saturday, September 21, 2002, from 12:00 to 6:00 p.m. and Sunday, September 22, 2002, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in downtown Eugene, at the former Criterion Gallery located at 35 West 8th Avenue. Because the exhibit was part of the popular Eugene Celebration, residents who may not otherwise participate in the Comprehensive Plan process were involved. Display boards provided information about City of Eugene parks, recreation and open spaces and aided participants in completing a brief questionnaire. The questionnaire focused on park, open space and recreation program and facility improvements. The results from the Eugene Celebration Questionnaire will be included in the Community Needs Assessment, an integral part of the comprehensive plan.

B. Questionnaire Sample

Four hundred fifty-six questionnaires were completed during the Eugene Celebration. Fifty of these were completed by non-residents and were not included in the data analysis. Because the questionnaire was not administered to a random sample of residents, the data from the questionnaire cannot be used to make generalizations about the entire population. This data is unique to the respondents who completed the questionnaire at the Eugene Celebration.

Almost all of the respondents have visited a park or natural area or have participated in a city-sponsored recreation program or special event in the last year (98.7%).

C. Key Findings

The following key findings emerged from the survey:

- The majority of respondents feel that parks, recreation services and open space are **very important** to Eugene's quality of life (81%).
- **Providing opportunities to enjoy nature/outdoors** (35.8%), **protecting the natural environment** (27.2%), and **connecting people together** (13.3%) were identified as the three most important benefits of parks, open space and recreation services.
- **Purchasing more natural areas** (21.1%), **developing additional smaller, close-to-home parks** (20.6%) and **upgrading/completing existing parks** (19.2%) were identified as the most important improvements to parks and open space.



- Generally, residents **prefer a park system that is slightly more natural than active**, when finding a balance between parks with natural open space versus developed recreational use.
- Residents feel our **current park system is slightly more active than natural**, in the amount of parks with natural open space versus developed recreational use.
- The top priorities for natural areas were identified as **acquiring more natural areas** (28.6%) and **improving habitat in existing areas** (28.2%).
- **Areas along rivers and creeks** (35.5%), **wetlands** (23.5%), and **forested areas** (22.6%) were identified by participants as the types of habitats that should be acquired and protected in Eugene.
- Respondents identified **teenagers** (ages 14-19) and **middle school youth** (ages 11-13) as the groups needing more or better recreation services in Eugene.
- Respondents included **multipurpose trails connecting community facilities** (32.7%) and **river access for recreation, swimming and boating** (20.9%) as the top two recreation elements most needed in Eugene.
- Participants rated relatively highly the **current condition of parks, open space, and recreation facilities**. Over 50% of the participants rated it a "4" on a scale of 1-5, with "1" signifying low quality and "5" high quality.
- Participants noted that they were reasonably satisfied with **parks, open space, and facility maintenance**. Nearly 47% of the participants rated it a "4" on a scale of 1-5, with "1" signifying dissatisfied and "5" satisfied.
- Overall, participants were **pleased** with the Comprehensive Plan exhibit at the Eugene Celebration. Almost 47% of the participants rated it a "4" on a scale of 1-5, with "1" signifying needing improvement and "5" as excellent.

II. QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

This section provides question-by-question analysis of the Eugene Celebration Questionnaire. The appendices provide supplemental information.

How important are parks, recreation services and open space to Eugene's quality of life?
(Please circle only one number.)

81.4% 5 = Very Important
 16.5% 4
 1.3% 3
 0.5% 2
 0.3% 1 = Not Important
 N = 387



Key Observations

- Over 80% of respondents believe that parks, open spaces and recreation services are very important to Eugene's quality of life.
- Less than 1.0% of respondents thought that these amenities are not important to quality of life.

Which of the following benefits of parks, open space and recreation services are most important to you? (Please check your top two choices.)

- 35.8% Provide opportunities to enjoy nature/outdoors
- 27.2% Protect the natural environment
- 13.3% Connect people together, building stronger families and neighborhoods
- 9.2% Improve health and wellness
- 6.9% Promote youth development
- 2.1% Provide cultural opportunities
- 2.0% Help seniors and disabled people remain active
- 1.7% Provide opportunities for lifelong learning
- 1.7% Other
- 0.0% They do not benefit the community

N = 352

Key Observations

- The most frequently cited benefit of parks and recreation was provide opportunities to enjoy nature/outdoors (35.8%) followed by protect the natural environment (27.2%).
- Providing cultural opportunities, helping seniors and disabled people remain active and providing lifelong learning were the least important benefits for respondents.

How can Eugene's parks and open spaces be improved? (Check your top two choices.)

- 21.1% Purchase more natural areas
- 20.6% Develop additional smaller, close-to-home parks
- 19.2% Upgrade/complete existing parks
- 16.1% Acquire parkland for future development
- 11.5% Improve habitat in existing City natural areas



- 5.6% Develop more, large, multi-use community parks
 - 3.1% Other
 - 2.4% Develop another metropolitan park serving the entire region
 - 0.4% No improvements needed
- N = 367

Key Observations

- In this question, one improvement did not receive a majority of the votes. Approximately 15 - 20% of the respondents favor purchasing more natural areas (21.1%), developing additional smaller, close-to-home parks (20.6%), upgrading/completing existing parks (19.2%) and acquiring parkland for future development (16.1%).
- Develop another metropolitan park serving the entire region (2.4%) was not frequently selected as a desired improvement to Eugene's parks and open spaces.

**What groups need more or better recreation services in Eugene?
(Please check your top two choices.)**

- 29.1% Teenagers 14-19
 - 17.5% Middle School youth 11-13
 - 11.9% Adults 20-55
 - 9.3% Disabled persons (any age)
 - 9.1% Seniors over age 55
 - 7.4% Youth 5-10
 - 5.6% People from diverse cultures
 - 5.3% Preschoolers up to age 4
 - 2.9% Other
 - 1.9% No improvements needed
- N = 341

Key Observations

- According to respondents, teenagers and middle school youth are the groups that most need more or better recreation services.
- Respondents were the least likely to select people from diverse cultures and preschoolers up to age 4 as needing more or better recreation services.



If you were in charge of park planning for the City, how would you balance the amount of natural open space provided with parks developed for active recreation use, such as neighborhood and community parks? On a scale of 1-10, with 1 representing entirely natural areas and 10 representing completely developed active parks, what is the right proportion of parks for Eugene? (Please circle only one number.)

3.7% 1 = Entirely Natural Parks
3.2% 2
14.9% 3
23.3% 4
28.1% 5
10.6% 6
9.8% 7
2.4% 8
1.6% 9
2.4% 10 = Completely Developed Active Parks
N = 377

Key Observations

- Approximately 50% of respondents chose a 4 or a 5 indicating that they would like park distribution to be slightly weighted toward entirely natural parks.

Using the same rating scale, how would you rate our current system of parks and natural areas?

1.4% 1 = Entirely Natural Parks
2.2% 2
4.4% 3
10.3% 4
18.9% 5
24.4% 6
22.2% 7
11.7% 8
3.1% 9
1.4% 10 = Completely Developed Active Parks
N = 360



Key Observations

- About 46% of respondents chose a 6 or 7 indicating that there are slightly more completely developed active parks than entirely natural parks. However, the majority of respondents would like to have slightly more entirely natural parks than developed active parks.

What are the top priorities for Eugene's natural areas? (Please check your top two choices.)

- 28.6% Acquire more natural areas
- 28.2% Improve habitat in existing natural areas
- 18.9% Provide more passive recreation opportunities
- 11.7% Inform community members about how their actions affect the environment
- 8.0% Increase volunteer participation in habitat restoration
- 2.5% Provide more displays describing values and features
- 1.8% Other
- 0.4% No improvements needed

N = 375

Key Observations

- Acquire more natural areas (28.6%) and improve habitat in existing natural areas (28.2%) were indicated as the top priorities for Eugene's natural areas.
- Provide more displays describing values and features (2.5%) was the least popular improvement to Eugene's natural areas.

If you think Eugene should acquire more natural areas, what kind of habitat types should be acquired and protected? (Please check your top two choices.)

- 35.5% Areas along rivers and streams
- 23.5% Wetlands
- 22.6% Forested areas
- 11.9% Oak savannahs
- 4.6% Grassland prairies
- 1.9% No improvements needed

N = 361

Key Observations

- According to respondents, riparian areas (35.5%), wetlands (23.5%) and forested areas (22.6%) are the habitat types most needing increased protection and acquisition.



Which of the following recreation elements are most needed in Eugene today?

- 32.7% Multipurpose trails connecting community facilities for biking, walking, etc.
- 20.9% River access for recreation, swimming and boating
- 8.7% Fenced, off leash dog parks
- 8.5% Swimming pool
- 8.1% Multi-use community center
- 7.2% Regional-scale children's play area
- 4.9% Sports facilities/sports complex
- 4.2% Other
- 2.9% Special event facilities for rental
- 1.9% Additional recreation facilities are not needed

N = 376

Key Observations

- The facilities most frequently chosen as a needed recreation element were multipurpose trails connecting community facilities for biking, walking, etc. and river access for recreation, swimming and boating.
- The least preferred element was special event facilities for rental.

**On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being poor quality and 5 being high quality, how would you rate the current overall condition of parks, open space and recreation facilities?
(Please circle only one number.)**

- 0.8% 1 = Low Quality
- 5.6% 2
- 31.8% 3
- 53.3% 4
- 8.5% 5 = High Quality

N = 377

Key Observations

- Over 50% of respondents rated the current overall condition of parks, open spaces and facilities as a 4 on a scale of 1 - 5 with 1 being low quality and 5 being high quality.



On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being dissatisfied and 5 being satisfied, how would you rate your overall satisfaction with the level of parks, open space and facility maintenance? (Please circle only one number.)

1.1% 1 = Dissatisfied

7.4% 2

30.8% 3

46.9% 4

13.8% 5 = Satisfied

N = 377

Key Observations

- Almost 50% of respondents rated current maintenance of parks, open space and facilities as a "4" on a scale of 1 - 5 with 1 being dissatisfied and 5 being satisfied.

My age is:

28.1% 45-54

21.5% 35-44

16.0% 25-34

13.1% 55-64

9.2% 18-24

4.7% 65+

5.0% 15-17

2.4 % 10-14

N=381

My gender is:

52.8% Female

47.2% Male

N=373



What is your ethnicity?

89.4% Caucasian
8.1% Other
1.4% Asian
0.8% African American
0.3% Hispanic
N=359

How would you rate this exhibit?

1.2% 1 = Needs improvement
5.4% 2
23.1% 3
46.7% 4
23.7% 5 = Excellent
N = 334

Key Observations

- Approximately 70% of the respondents rated the exhibit favorably (4 or 5).

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